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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between class size and classroom management style and examined differences between perceived classroom management style of teachers who had and had not enrolled in a graduate course within the last 6 months. The study also investigated the construct validity of the Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control (ABCC) Inventory, which measured teachers' perceptions of their classroom management beliefs and practices. Classroom management was defined as a multifaceted construct that included three broad dimensions (instructional, people, and behavior management). Data were collected from 286 teachers by using the ABCC Inventory and a demographic questionnaire. Participants, predominately Asian American and Caucasian females 23-63 years, were drawn directly from two public urban school districts in the southwest. Analyses determined a significant positive relationship between average enrollment of classes taught and scores on two of the three subscales of the ABCC Inventory. As class enrollment increased, teachers scored more controlling on the People Management and Behavior Management subscales of the ABCC. There was no significant relationship between class size and the Instructional Management subscale. Analysis of data on teachers who had and had not taken graduate courses within the last 6 months revealed no significant differences between the groups regarding the instructional, people, or behavior management subscales. (Contains 2 tables and 25 references.) (Author/SM)

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Class Size and Teacher Graduate Study: Do These Variables Impact Teachers' Beliefs Regarding Classroom Management Style?

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ABSTRACT

This study represents a continuation of research efforts to further refine the Attitudes & Beliefs on Classroom Control (ABCC) Inventory. Formerly titled the Inventory of Classroom Management Style, the ABCC is an instrument designed to measure teachers' perceptions of their classroom management beliefs and practices. The objectives of this study were three-fold: 1. to investigate the relationship between class size and classroom management style, 2. to investigate differences between the perceived classroom management style of those teachers who have and those who have not enrolled in a graduate course within the last 6 months, and 3. to further substantiate the construct validity of the Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control (ABCC) Inventory.

Data were collected utilizing the ABCC and demographics. The subject pool was composed of 286 certified teachers. Subjects were primarily urban (73%) and female (58%). Participants ranged in age from 23 to 63 with the average age of 41.7 years. Teachers reported an overall average of 14.35 years teaching experience. Ethnic composition of the subject pool was as follows: 2.1% African-American, 0.7% Asian, 69.9% Caucasian, 21.9% Hispanic; 2.7% were of other ethnic origin.

Results revealed significant, positive correlations between average class enrollment and teachers' scores on the People Management and Behavior Management sub-scales of the ABCC. No significance was determined regarding the People Management sub-scale. A 1-way ANOVA failed to yield significant differences between those teachers who have enrolled in graduate courses in the last 6 months and those who have not. Results seem to be in keeping with the construct.

Class Size and Teacher Graduate Study: Do These Variables Impact Teachers' Beliefs Regarding Classroom Management Style?

Although often used interchangeably, the terms *classroom management* and *discipline* are not synonymous. *Discipline* typically refers to the structures and rules for student behavior and efforts to ensure that students comply with those rules. *Classroom management*, on the other hand, is a broader, umbrella term describing teacher efforts to oversee a multitude of activities in the classroom including learning, social interaction, and student behavior.

Within this study, classroom management style is defined as a multi-faceted construct that includes three broad, independent dimensions -- instructional management, people management, and behavior management. It is operationalized as behavioral tendencies that teachers utilize to conduct daily instructional activities. These tendencies reflect the teacher's discipline, communication, and instructional styles, as well as the classroom spatial management. All of these manifest in the teacher's preferences and efforts to attain desirable educational goals.

Dimension one, instructional management, includes aspects such as monitoring seatwork, structuring daily routines, and allocating materials. The manner in which these tasks are managed contributes to the general classroom atmosphere and classroom management style (Burden, 1995; Kounin, 1970; McNeely & Mertz, 1990; Weinstein & Mignano, 1993). Nowhere is this better documented than in Kounin's classic (1970) study of orderly and disorderly classrooms. Concepts such as smoothness and momentum of instruction were consistently found to be characteristics of well-planned lessons that prevented off-task behaviors. More recent research has revealed similar findings. For example, McNeely and Mertz's (1990) study revealed that student teachers began their field experience by focusing on quality lesson planning. By the end of their experience, however, they had begun to see students as the "enemy" and shifted the focus of lesson planning from activities designed to encourage learning to those likely to discourage disruption.

The people management dimension pertains to what teachers believe about students as persons and what teachers do to develop the teacher-student relationship. A large body of

literature indicates that academic achievement and productive behavior are influenced by the quality of the teacher-student relationship (Burden, 1995; Glasser, 1986; Ginott, 1972; Gordon, 1974; Evertson, Emmer, Clements, & Worsham, 1997; Weinstein, 1996). As Weinstein (1996) explains, ". . . teachers are good when they take the time to learn who their students are and what they are like, . . . when they laugh with their students, . . . and when they are both a friend and a responsible adult" (p. 76).

The third dimension, behavior management, is similar to, but different than, discipline in that it focuses on pre-planned means of preventing misbehavior rather than the teacher's reaction to it. Specifically, this facet includes setting rules, establishing a reward structure, and providing opportunities for student input. Emmer, Evertson, and Anderson's classic (1980) study documented one of the primary differences between effective and ineffective classroom managers was the manner in which they formulated and implemented classroom rules. Still, classroom rules are of little assistance if students are not motivated to follow them. As Weinstein and Mignano (1993) explain, ". . . classroom order is like conversation: It can only be achieved if both parties agree to participate" (p. 88). Establishing an effective reward structure and encouraging student input can be useful tools in the prevention of misbehavior and the maintenance of order in the classroom environment.

Wolfgang and Glickman (1980, 1986) conceptualized a framework to explain teacher beliefs toward child development. Based on a combination of psychological interpretations, their continuum illustrates three approaches to classroom interaction--non-interventionists, interventionists, and interactionalists. The non-interventionist presupposes the child has an inner drive that needs to find its expression in the real world. Proponents of transactional analysis or Gordon's *Teacher Effectiveness Training* (1974) are considered non-interventionists. At the opposite end of the continuum are interventionists--those who emphasize what the outer environment of people and objects does to the human organism to cause it to develop in its particular way. Traditional behavior modification provides the theoretical foundation for this school of thought. Midway between these two extremes, interactionalists focus on what the

individual does to modify the external environment as well as what the environment does to shape him or her. Alfred Adler, Rudolf Dreikurs, and William Glasser provide the theoretical underpinnings for interactionalist ideology.

The assumption is that teachers believe and act according to all three models of discipline, but one usually predominates in beliefs and actions (Wolfgang & Glickman, 1980; 1986). Therefore, the application of these various theories emphasizes teacher behaviors that reflect the corresponding degrees of power possessed by student and teacher.

The facets of classroom management may vary as a function of class size. No where is this more clearly delineated than by Tennessee's Project STAR (Student Teacher Achievement Ratio) (Achilles, 1996; Pate-Bain & Achilles, et al., 1992). In summary, the longitudinal studies of K through grade 3 discerned that ". . . compared to larger classes,

- small classes ameliorate the effects of large schools
- fewer students are held back a grade
- while small classes benefit all students, minority students benefit the most
- students receive more individual attention
- smaller classes are friendlier and more intimate
- there are fewer discipline problems in smaller classes;
- students are more likely to participate in activities. (1996, p. 77)

Considering the class as the unit of measurement rather than individual students, the studies also revealed higher achievement over those students who had attended regular sized classes.

While there are student benefits to be obtained from smaller class sizes, the Project STAR line of research also highlights the importance of teacher characteristics and instructional styles. Teachers whose classes scored in the top 15% of scaled-score average gains in reading and math were observed and interviewed thus revealing they consistently ". . . engaged their [first graders] through the use of creative writing, hands-on experiences, learning centers, and math manipulatives. They practiced Lee Canter's assertive discipline or some variation of it and made it clear that they had high expectations for their students. They maintained good communication

with parents" (Pate-Bain & Achilles et al., 1992, p. 255). Considering these instructional techniques, it is not surprising that 84% of these outstanding teachers taught small classes or regular size classes with a full-time instructional aide.

Although important, these findings focus on the effects/differences of smaller class size in grades K - 3 and not in the upper grades. Despite obvious budgetary concerns, Shanker (1985) believes secondary level teachers of academic subjects should have instructional responsibility for no more than 90 to 100 students in the course of a school day. With the typical five teaching periods a day (at 25 to 40 students per class period), even a small homework assignment "yields 150 to 200 papers that must be examined and analyzed" (Shanker, 1985, p. 313). Clearly, class size is likely to directly impact the nature of instruction as well as teacher-student interaction.

The nature of the subject pool is always an important factor in the research process. Often, researchers tap graduate (or undergraduate) students for research projects because we have easy access to them. However, this study questions whether teachers who continue their education are somehow different from the population of educators at large. Unlike subjects previously tapped in this line of research, these participants were drawn directly from the public schools and not from university graduate level courses.

Research efforts to explore the effects of classroom management on instructional effectiveness and the educational environment are limited by the quality of instruments presently available to measure the construct. Although there are two scales that measure teachers' approaches to discipline (Pupil Control Ideology, Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1967; Beliefs on Discipline Inventory, Wolfgang & Glickman, 1980, 1986), there is no instrument that addresses the broader concept of classroom management. Therefore, little empirical research has been done regarding the broader concept of classroom management.

In the minds of teachers, classroom management is considered one of the most enduring and widespread problems in education (Johns, MacNaughton, & Karabinus, 1989; Long & Frye, 1989; Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1967). Clearly, there is a need to investigate the consequences of classroom management beliefs and practices further. The objectives of this study were three-

fold: 1. to investigate the relationship between class size and classroom management style, 2. to investigate differences between the perceived classroom management style of those teachers who have and have not enrolled in a graduate course within the last 6 months, and 3. to further substantiate the construct validity of the Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control (ABCC) Inventory.

Methods & Procedures

Data were collected via a revised version of the Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control (ABCC) Inventory and demographics. Within this study, classroom management was defined as a multi-faceted construct that includes three broad dimensions: Instructional Management, People Management, and Behavior Management. The ABCC Inventory, an instrument designed to measure teachers' perceptions of their classroom management beliefs and practices, consists of 26 Likert format statements. A four category response scale for each item was used. Beliefs were classified on a continuum originally suggested by Wolfgang and Glickman (1980, 1986) that reflects the degree of teacher power over students in each of the three dimensions.

Subjects

Data were collected from a total of 286 teachers using the Attitudes and Beliefs of Classroom Control (ABCC) Inventory and a demographic questionnaire. Subjects were drawn from two public school districts in the southwest. Unlike subject pools previously tapped in this line of research, these participants were drawn directly from the public schools and not from university graduate level courses.

The subject pool was primarily urban (73%) and female (58%). Participants ranged in age from 23 to 63 with the average age of 41.7 years. Teachers reported an overall average of 14.35 years teaching experience. Ethnic composition of the subject pool was as follows: 2.1% African-American, 0.7% Asian, 69.9% Caucasian, 21.9% Hispanic; 2.7% were of other ethnic origin.

Results

Analyses determined a significant positive relationship between average enrollment of classes taught and scores on two of the three sub-scales of the ABCC. (See Table 1.) As class enrollment increases, teachers' score more controlling on the People Management and Behavior Management sub-scales of the ABCC Inventory. No significant relationship was determined between class size and the Instructional Management sub-scale.

Table 1.
Pearson Product-Moment Correlations of the ABCC Inventory Subscales with Average Class Enrollment.

Instructional Management	People Management	Behavior Management
r = .0171	r = .146	r = .181
p = .787	p = .022	p = .004

On the demographic questionnaire, subjects were asked if they had enrolled in a university graduate level course within the last six months. Unlike subject pools previously tapped in this line of research, these participants were drawn directly from the public schools and not from university graduate level courses. The assumption was that those teachers enrolled in graduate courses may not be representative of the population at large. Data were analyzed via a one-way ANOVA; none of the three sub-scales of the ABCC yielded significance. (See Table 2.)

Table 2.
1-Way ANOVA: Graduate Enrollment & ABCC Inventory Subscales

	Enrolled	Not Enrolled	F	p
Instructional Management	M = 40.41 SD = 6.78	M = 41.96 SD = 6.73	2.315	p = .129
People Management	M = 23.83 SD = 3.95	M = 24.06 SD = 3.70	.185	p = .668
Behavior Management	M = 18.27 SD = 2.86	M = 19.03 SD = 2.83	3.222	p = .074

Summary & Discussion

Within this study, classroom management was defined as a multi-faceted construct that includes three broad dimensions -- instructional management, people management, and behavior management. Beliefs regarding these facets can vary and play a role in the teacher's approach to classroom management style. Wolfgang and Glickman (1980, 1986) conceptualized a framework to explain teacher beliefs toward child development. Based on a combination of psychological interpretations, their continuum illustrates three approaches to classroom interaction--non-interventionists, interventionists, and interactionalists.

Research results have revealed differences in achievement and classroom interaction as a result of class size (Achilles, 1996; Pate-Bain & Achilles et al., 1992). However, research efforts to explore the effects of classroom management on instructional effectiveness and the educational environment are limited by the quality of instruments presently available to measure the construct. Although there are scales that measure teachers' approaches to discipline, there is no instrument that addresses the broader concept of classroom management.

This study is a continuation of previous research regarding the nature of classroom management styles (i.e.: Baldwin & Martin, 1994; Martin & Baldwin, 1997, 1996, 1994, 1993; Martin, Baldwin, & Yin, 1995; Martin, Yin, & Baldwin,1997). The objectives of this study were three-fold: 1. to investigate the relationship between class size and classroom management style, 2. to investigate differences between the perceived classroom management style of those teachers who have and those who have not enrolled in a graduate course within the last 6 months, and 3. to further substantiate the construct validity of the Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control (ABCC) Inventory.

Two of the three sub-scales of the ABCC Inventory and class size yielded significant (positive) correlations. (See Table 1.) As class size increased, so did scores on the People Management and Behavior Management sub-scales of the ABCC. The Instructional Management sub-scale failed to yield a statistically significant relationship with class size.

It stands to reason that larger class sizes provide fewer opportunities for teacher-student interactions and thus impede the development of meaningful instructor-pupil relationships (People Management). Similarly, as class size increases, so does the difficulty of monitoring student behavior (Behavior Management). As class enrollments increase, teachers are likely to become more controlling in these two components of classroom management.

Instructional Management, however, differs from People Management and Behavior Management. As research concludes, when it comes to managing the instructional environment, providing smaller classes is of little consequence without necessary training. As Pate-Bain, Achilles, et al. (1992) assert,

> Providing teachers with an appropriate student load will make *possible* the individualized and personalized instruction that is the basis of sound education. However, if this reduction in student load is to be educationally effective, finances must be provided for all present and future teachers to be adequately trained in small-group instruction. (p. 256) (Emphasis added.)

Simply presenting teachers with smaller classes is not likely to result in different approaches to instruction. Teacher training is necessary for such adaptations to occur.

In order to ascertain differences between the perceived classroom management style of those teachers who have and those who have not enrolled in a graduate course within the last 6 months, a series of 1-way ANOVAs were performed. Results revealed no significant difference between these two groups of teachers regarding the Instructional, People, or Behavior Management sub-scales of the ABCC Inventory. (See Table 2.) Those subjects who have recently enrolled in graduate study either had not studied material related to the areas tapped in this study or the additional study had not influenced their ideology. Little is known regarding the nature of the subjects' graduate study, i.e.: coursework taken or the programs in which they were enrolled. Public schools are under increasing demands and obtaining permission to collect data in the schools can be a time consuming and cumbersome task. These results indicate that this interim step may not be necessary. Meaningful research results may be gleaned from those

graduate students who are teachers. These results should be interpreted cautiously, however, as they may be sample specific.

Construct validity is a complex and on-going process. This study represents a step in the process of establishing the construct of classroom management. Many questions remain unasked and unanswered. Do ethnic and cultural differences exit? How do personality variables effect classroom management? What is the "best" style for managing the classroom? Do teacher perceptions of their classroom management style match their behavior in the classroom?

There can be little doubt that the teachers encounter a variety of new experiences in the classroom. Their beliefs regarding these experiences and the manner in which they approach them work together to create a unique and individual style of classroom management.

A clearer understanding of the facets of classroom management will hopefully facilitate the process of university level instruction of pre-service and experienced teachers. Because of the lack of an empirically derived body of information, a systematic means of measuring these factors seems to be a fruitful one for future study. The Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control (ABCC) Inventory appears to be a timely and useful tool for additional research in this area.

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